



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Residents:

The City of Westminster, with the assistance of the Carroll County Health Department, is preparing for the possibility of a pandemic outbreak of the H1N1 virus, formerly referred to as swine flu,

in the next several months. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that as much as 30% of the general population could be affected. This would represent more than 50,000 residents here in Carroll County.

The incubation period (the timeframe between acquiring the infection and becoming ill) for influenza averages just 2 days. People who become ill may begin transmitting infection to others one-half to one day prior to becoming ill. Transmission of the infection is greatest in the first two days of illness, and children have been found to transmit the infection most easily.

Influenza infection rates are typically highest among school-aged children and risk of illness generally declines with age. The severity of influenza is likely to be highest in young, middle-aged persons, as well as those with serious pre-existing medical conditions. Approximately 50% of those who become ill will seek outpatient medical care. The influenza outbreak could last 6 to 8 weeks, with at least two waves of the disease likely.

Depending on the severity of the outbreak, it is possible that City services will have to be curtailed or postponed. For example, it may be necessary to close the Family Center for a period of time and cancel fitness training sessions to help eliminate the spread of the flu. Board and Commission meetings may be postponed or cancelled and offices may be closed to the public.

We are developing a plan to cope with these possible outcomes and to ensure the health and safety of both our City employees and the general public. Up to date information on City services can be obtained by calling 410-848-9000 or by visiting our web page at www.westminstermd.gov.

To assist you in planning your own personal strategy for dealing with a pandemic outbreak, we have identified actions and activities you can take in your own home to prevent this disease. These procedures are found on page 2.

At the same time the City is preparing for a possible influenza outbreak, we are also preparing for a reduction in revenues as a result of the State's worsening budget picture. Based on current information, the City could see a 6% reduction in State Aid to Police and Highway User Revenues in the current fiscal year.

The Highway User Revenue, which is mainly funded from gasoline taxes, car titling fees, and driver licensing, were reduced from a budgeted \$747,850 to \$74,850. The Police Aid funding dropped from a budgeted \$400,000 to \$254,826.

To accommodate these budget cuts, a hiring freeze has been imposed and no vacant positions will be filled, no programs or projects beyond those already funded will be implemented, and capital projects and equipment purchases have been cancelled.

One way that you can keep abreast of City information, news, and activities is to visit our website (www.westminstermd.gov). This site was just updated in July and hosts a variety of information, not only about the City government but also about our partners, businesses, and volunteer organizations. Please visit the site on a regular basis to keep current with City happenings.

Kevin Utz

Helpful Tips for Minimizing Potential Flu Infection

Prior to a pandemic influenza emergency, it is important that all citizens plan for and employ effective strategies to minimize their potential for infection and minimize the impact on their families. These strategies should include the following:

1. Obtaining annual flu vaccinations for all family members.
2. Frequently washing hands and using hand sanitizers.
3. Employing proper respiratory “etiquette”:
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Frequent cleaning of surfaces such as telephone receivers, doorknobs, public counters, etc.
4. Strict adherence to guidance provided by public health officials.
5. Employing “Social Distancing” strategies. The strategies are intended to reduce the spread of infection and they include:
 - Staying away from people who appear to be ill.
 - Avoiding crowds and public events.
 - Staying at home when possible.
 - Canceling public events.
 - Closing schools.
6. “Self-Quarantine” — Elements of self-quarantine include the following:
 - Keep your family at home and away from people who may be infectious.
 - Be prepared for a period of time where customary services are not available to the public due to the spread of the flu. Those preparations should include keeping a 3 to 5 day supply of food on-hand, as well as one-gallon of water per day per family member.
 - Have a family “Go Kit” available in case there is a need to relocate. This “Go Kit” should contain basic necessities to include:
 - ✓ 3 to 5 day supply of food and water.
 - ✓ Flashlight and batteries.
 - ✓ Change of clothing.
 - ✓ Prescription medications for one week.
 - ✓ List of physician and important medical information.
 - ✓ Cell phone and charger.
 - ✓ Identifications, credit cards, and cash.
 - ✓ Battery-powered radio and batteries.
 - Be prepared to care for ill family members at home. This includes keeping a supply of basic medical supplies in your home and knowing how to isolate sick people in home away from other family members (i.e. separate bedrooms and bathrooms).

Keeping these tips in mind will help minimize the potential for and the spread of infection.

Westminster Tree Commission

The purpose of the Westminster Tree Commission is to develop and help implement a tree program that ensures the proper care and treatment of trees and shrubs within public spaces of the City. Also, the Commission provides expertise to City staff and the public regarding best management practices for tree care and management.

A committee was formed in 1983 for inventory and then the Tree Commission was established in 1988. The members are appointed to three year terms by the Mayor and Common Council.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
Joe Barley- chair	05/10
Neil Ridgely	02/12
Steve Allgeier	12/10
Richard Wilbur	10/11
Jay Bogash	05/10
Roland Backhaus	04/10

City Staff: Eric Schlitzer (City Arborist), Tim Rogers (City Planner). Meetings are scheduled as needed, and at least one per quarter is necessary. Contact: Tim Rogers trogers@westgov.com or 410-848-4628.

In a community like Westminster, in the middle of rural Carroll County, it is easy to overlook the need for trees in urban settings. It seems we are surrounded by nothing but rolling farmland and forests, so why be concerned about trees and green areas in the City? This entire newsletter could easily be consumed discussing the environmental benefits of urban trees, including storm water filtration and air quality benefits. A few pages would likely be devoted to discussing how properly placed trees can reduce heating and cooling costs in homes and businesses. An additional page would be used to discuss pavement cooling and traffic calming. Then, this volume would conclude with an exhausting list of facts regarding increased property values, revenue for businesses on tree-lined streets, reduced carbon footprint, and increased sense of com

munity. While these are all perfectly reasonable justifications for the value of urban trees, why not keep it simple:



Tree City USA

Celebrating 20 Years as a "Tree City USA"! Westminster is in elite company when it comes to showing dedication to urban trees! Since 1988, Westminster has been designated a *Tree City USA* by the Arbor Day Foundation each year. Of the 157 municipalities in Maryland, only 37 are currently designated, and only eight have been designated longer than Westminster (see <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/map.cfm> for a complete listing). Even more impressive is that in 2001 Westminster became the second city in the state to receive the "Sterling Award" for ten consecutive years of urban tree program growth.

To be a *Tree City USA*, a city has to demonstrate its commitment to urban trees through policy, budget, and outreach initiatives. In Westminster, the Tree Commission oversees these activities to ensure continued recertification. Recent outreach projects include:



- Helping neighbors plant 20 new street trees along West George Street
- Planting three new trees at Belle Grove Square park and replacing diseased trees
- Helping students plant trees at East and West Middle Schools; and William Winchester, Westminster, and Friendship Valley Elementary schools
- Organizing the Annual Community Forestry Workshop for area tree care professionals

To display our pride in being designated, there is a Tree City USA flag flying at City Hall, a wall full of plaques inside City Hall, and a street sign at every entrance to downtown. Feel free to contact the City if you would like to know more.

What Lies Ahead for the Tree Commission?

At the end of each year, the Commission meets with City staff to discuss accomplishments from the previous year and program activities for the coming year. To wrap up 2009, the Commission sponsored the 17th Annual Community Forestry Workshop at McDaniel College on October 8th. The event offered affordable training for area tree care industry professionals. The program this year consisted of sessions on safety, pruning, disease identification, proper planting techniques, and hazard tree identification. A video of one of the sessions is available on the City website.

At the end of March 2010, the Tree Commission will conduct Arbor Week activities. This is when the commission does most of its outreach, and will normally

conduct a planting at a local school. Since next year's activities have not yet been planned, contact the Commission if you have an idea for a planting and/or outreach project.

Also in 2010, the Commission and City staff will be preparing for and starting a Public Space Tree Inventory

project. The current inventory has not been updated in nearly fifteen years. This updated inventory will provide the data needed for a more efficient management program, and will likely take a year or two to complete.

If you have a suggestion or concern regarding trees in your neighborhood, or would like to learn more about the Tree Commission and the City's street tree program, contact the Department of Planning at 410-848-9000 or the City Arborist's office at 410-848-9077, or visit us on the web at: www.westminstermd.gov/citygov/citygov_tree.htm.

For more information and some helpful tips on trees, visit the following web sites:

www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programs/urban
www.arboday.org
www.fs.fed.us/ucf
www.treelink.org
www.naturewithin.info



City Arborist Eric Schlitzer, and Tree Commissioners Jay Bogash and Steve Allgeier install a street tree on West George Street.



Westminster Recreation and Parks Events in November

Wednesday, November 11: 4pm Veterans Day Ceremony remembers our fallen soldiers. The service is open to the public and at the Westminster Armory (11 Longwell Avenue). For more information call American Legion Post #31 at 410-857-7593 or 410-876-0746.



Monday to Wednesday, November 23-25: Fall Holiday Camp is offered for 6-10 year-old children over the holiday break. Crafts, games, sports, and snacks are provided. Camp will be held on the Monday to Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving. Registration can be for one day or all three. Cost is \$20 per day, per child with an additional \$5 per day, per child fee for before care (7-9am) and after care (4-6pm). Participants need to bring a bagged lunch and a drink. Snacks are provided. Dress your child for play and fun - we suggest old clothes. Call 410-848-9161 for more information.

Saturday, November 28: Holiday Parade, Tree Lighting, and Santa. FREE! See next page for more details.

Need a space to have your next party???

Consider having your next scrapbooking party, business meeting, baby shower, or birthday party at the Community Building located at 325 Royer Road. This facility is equipped with a kitchenette that includes a refrigerator, microwave oven, stovetop, sink, plenty of cabinet space, and a spacious, heated bathroom. The foyer contains a large coat rack along with shelving for storage. This area accommodates 50 people comfortably with tables and chairs provided. Please contact the Recreation and Parks Office at 410-848-9161 to check availability. *Booking now for January 2010!*



Carroll Arts Center November into December

Now through November 20: Four Visions in a Different Light. The photographic works in this spellbinding exhibit have been created using infrared photography. The artists use alternative processes, digital collage, printmaking, painting, and non-silver techniques. Featuring Susan Ruddick Bloom, Westminster, Theresa Airey, Monkton, Jill Enfield, NYC, and Elizabeth Opalenik, Oakland, CA.



Now through November 20: Art with a Bite. Dentists work for years mastering the art of creating a perfect smile, but many of them are talented in other art forms as well. This exhibit features paintings and photographs by several local dentists including Lawrence Eden, Edward Goldman, William Jennette, Rudolph Kilma, Robert Scott, Arnold Sindler, and Gerald Title. It's sure to put a smile on your face too!

Saturday, November 7: 8 pm. Russ Barenberg, presented by Common Ground on the Hill, is a Grammy-nominated acoustic guitarist and composer who creates "exquisitely original" music that joyously integrates bluegrass, jazz, and American/Celtic fiddle and dance traditions. Long at the creative forefront of the acoustic music scene, Russ has collaborated with many of its finest artists, including Jerry Douglas, Edgar Meyer, Bela Fleck, Alison Krauss, and, most recently, legendary jazz bassist, Charlie Haden. Tickets are \$19/\$17.

Friday, November 13, 7 pm; Saturday November 14, 3 and 7 pm; Sunday, November 15, 3 pm "Romeo and Harriet" displays the talents of more than 50 teens in this musical spoof of "Romeo & Juliet," set in modern day New York City. It features the clerks of the swanky Montague's Department Store and the second-rate Capulet's Discount Mart. Romeo and Harriet, the heirs to these two retail empires, fall in love, just as Shakespeare's characters did, but this musical has a happy ending! There's laughter galore as the quarrelling chorus members trade insults filled with comic wit. The production is a partnership between Carroll County Arts Council and Maryland Ensemble Theatre.

Friday, November 20: 8 pm, FLICC presents "Diner", 1982; Rated R; 110 minutes. This film is a nostalgic look at the 1950s through the eyes of a group of young men hanging out at their favorite Baltimore diner. Bring a canned food item for Carroll Food Sunday and get a free bag of popcorn. Sponsored by PFG Foods.

December 2 through 6: 12th Annual Festival of Wreaths. The Festival, which has become one of Carroll County's most well-attended holiday events, will feature more than 230 uniquely decorated theme wreaths on display for the public through a five-day silent auction. Proceeds benefit the Carroll County Arts Council. Festival Hours are 10 am to 8 pm Wednesday through Saturday, and 1 pm to 4 pm on Sunday. Bidding ends promptly at 4 pm on Sunday, December 6. High Bidders need not be present at auction close. Admission is free. The Festival is sponsored by PNC Bank and The Carroll County Times.

Thursday, December 3 and Friday December 4 at 7:30pm, and Saturday, December 5 and 11am and 2pm: A "Charlie Brown Christmas" with live jazz! Back by popular demand will be the unique pairing of the beloved animated film "Charlie Brown's Christmas" with the infectious Vince Guaraldi jazz score performed live by the Eric Byrd Trio. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for CCAC members, seniors 60+ and students 18 and under. Sponsored by Woodhaven Development Corporation.

Friday, December 11, 8pm and Saturday, December 12, 3pm & 8pm: A live production of "A Christmas Carol" will be presented by the acclaimed Maryland Ensemble Theatre. Beautiful staging, breathtaking special effects, and stellar performances combine for a magical theatrical experience. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for CCAC members, students 18 and under, and seniors 60+.

Shop With a Cop Program a Great Help



The Westminster Police Department holds two Shop With a Cop events each year, one for back to school and one for the holidays. Last year, a family who participated in the holiday event received a computer, and the mother, Megan Webb, entered the Police Department into a contest with Edy's Ice Cream and won! She threw a big ice cream social at the fire department for those instrumental in helping her family during such hard times. Here is her winning entry story:

"I live in Westminster, MD one of the best small towns in America. Due to situations beyond my control, the last year have been very hard. My community has helped me beyond my dreams. They have provided food, clothing, and financial assistance to us, but most of all the police officers in my town took my children Christmas shopping and gave them new bikes, and while the kids were gone delivered my children's entire wish list for Christmas, along with food for the holidays. All of this was possible due to donations from the community. Things like this show the character of the people in my town. Within one mile of my home is the police station, women's shelter, and local food bank where daily you will find members of my community receiving help during these difficult times. You will also find million-dollar homes next to apartments and local businesses. I would like to be able to have a party to thank all of those who have helped me and to allow my fellow neighbors in need know that we are a community who stands united in a time of need. The kindness and help my community gives on a daily basis shows to everyone that we are one big family together in good and bad times and places like this deserve to be recognized. It may be hard to believe, but in a small town your entire community are your neighbors and we are also a extended family who is there day or night no matter what!"

Way to go, Megan, and thank you very much from the Westminster City Police Department!

Main Street Holiday Events—FREE!

On November 28, 2009 the City of

Westminster and the Main Street Committee of Greater Westminster Development Corporation will be hosting the **Miracle**

on Main Street Holiday Event. The Main Street Committee instituted the idea of expanding the City of Westminster **Annual Tree Lighting** event. This year, the **holiday parade** will take on a whole new life and roll down Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street at 5pm. It will include 50 floats with a holiday theme and over 2,000 lights on each. It is the first electric parade held in Westminster, Maryland. Just prior to the parade, the WISH program will host the **Wishbone Mile**, a fundraiser to support the community's health care needs. At the finale of the parade, Mayor Kevin Utz will present the **Mayor's Cup**, an award for the best holiday decorations for Downtown businesses, and then he will **light the City of Westminster's Christmas tree** at Locust Lane. **Santa's Treat**, a party for children, will be held at the Westminster Fitness Center (Old Armory) on Longwell Avenue. Rides, games, prizes and Santa will be featured. The **Holiday Shopping Spree Raffle** grand prize winners will be drawn that evening. The first raffle is for a four-night cruise to the Bahamas, and the second raffle is for a Baltimore Ravens autographed football. Downtown and Town Mall merchants have graciously donated gift certificates to be included in both raffles as just a little help to make holiday shopping a little easier. Raffle tickets are available at Downtown businesses and City offices. The rain date is November 29th.

**Electric
Holiday Parade**
on Main St. starts at
5:00pm
Floats on display on
Longwell Lot
after parade.

**Starlight
Shopping**
in Downtown
Westminster
5-10pm

A special **Starlight Shopping** event will run from 5-10pm on November 28, 2009. Downtown Main Street businesses will be open special hours for patrons to catch up on their holiday shopping.